

Remarks

August 10, 2006

- Good morning. I would like to provide you with the latest information that we have on recent events in the United Kingdom, and an update on the actions that we are taking to protect our citizens and to keep air travel safe and secure.
- As you are aware, British authorities have arrested at least 21 extremists, alleged to have engaged in a plot to detonate liquid explosives onboard multiple commercial aircraft departing from the United Kingdom and bound for the United States. This plot appears to have been well planned and well-advanced, with a significant number of operatives. The terrorists planned to carry the components of the bombs – including liquid explosive ingredients and detonating devices – disguised as beverages, electronic devices, and other common objects.
- While the operation was centered in Britain, we believe it was international in scope.
- We believe that the arrests in Britain have significantly disrupted this threat. We cannot assume, however, that it has been completely thwarted, or that we have fully identified and neutralized all members of this terrorist network.
- While there is currently no indication of any plotting within the United States, the federal government is taking immediate steps to increase security measures in the aviation sector.
- First, the United States Government has raised the nation's threat level to our highest level of alert, Severe or Red, for commercial flights originating in the United Kingdom bound for the United States. This adjustment coordinates our alert level with the Critical, or highest, alert level that has been implemented in the United Kingdom.

- Further, as a precaution against any loose ends in the plot, and against any would-be copy-cats who may be inspired to conduct similar attacks, we will also raise the threat level to High, or Orange, for all domestic commercial aviation and for flights arriving in the United States from overseas.
- More specifically, in light of the nature of the liquid explosive devices designed by the plotters, we are temporarily banning all liquids as carry-ons in the cabin. No liquids or gels will be allowed in carry-on baggage. They must be checked. We will make exceptions for baby formula and medicines, but be prepared to present these items for inspection at the checkpoint. This will allow us to make adjustments to our screening tactics based on what we learn from this investigation.
- In general, packing lightly and minimizing clutter will do a great deal to make the screening process easier and faster.
- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will be implementing a series of security measures – some visible and some not visible -- to ensure the security of the traveling public and the Nation's transportation system.
- TSA is immediately implementing changes to airport screening procedures to prevent liquids or gels of any kind in carry-on baggage. The Federal Air Marshals Service (FAMS) will provide expanded mission coverage for flights from the United Kingdom to the United States.
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection will increase enforcement efforts in international arrival areas including the use of advanced targeting tools, special response teams including baggage and aircraft search teams, baggage x-ray equipment, specially-trained canine units, and explosive detection technology. These measures will be constantly evaluated and updated when circumstances warrant.
- We recognize that these measures are inconvenient. But they are proportionate to the very real threat to the lives of innocent people.

What is important is that we are taking every prudent step to thwart new tactics of terror.

- Today, air traffic is safe. Air traffic will remain safe, precisely because of the measures we are implementing today.
- As always, the American public should remain aware, and report any activity they deem suspicious to local authorities or other appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- The American public can be assured that the United States Government is doing everything in its power, under the leadership of President Bush, and in cooperation with our British allies, to defend our nations. We will continue to provide updates throughout the day as appropriate, and now I'd like to turn to Attorney General Gonzales.